

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 696

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Sergeant Lowell Russell for his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee and wish him a full and speedy recovery.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal concerns to ensure the public's safety and welfare, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty in service of public safety and risk their lives on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through public service, dedicating their time and efforts to aiding those in emergency situations; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Lowell Russell is one such noteworthy individual who is making immeasurable contributions to his community as a Tennessee Highway Patrolman and who exhibits superior standards of professional conduct and ethics; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Russell was seriously injured in the line of duty on March 13, 2012, after a tractor-trailer rig hit his police cruiser on Interstate 40 (I-40) after making a traffic stop; and

WHEREAS, Knoxville police officer Andrew Keith arrived on the scene just moments after the crash occurred; and

WHEREAS, according to police reports, Officer Keith was traveling east on I-40 near the Walker Springs Road interchange when he saw Sgt. Russell had a vehicle stopped on the westbound side. Officer Keith opted to see if Sgt. Russell needed backup, so he took the next exit to get on the westbound lanes; the crash occurred as Officer Keith was getting back onto I-40; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Russell was in his cruiser on the right shoulder of I-40 when the truck struck his vehicle, sending it across three lanes of traffic before smashing it against the concrete median wall; and

WHEREAS, Officer Keith arrived just seconds after an ambulance crew from McMinn County. The American Medical Response ambulance had just taken a patient to a Knoxville hospital and was returning when it encountered the crash in the early hours of the morning; and

WHEREAS, the ambulance crew, consisting of Freddie Leslie and Kristi Graham, and Officer Keith noted that Sgt. Russell was unresponsive and began to perform CPR as the flares and ammunition in Sgt. Russell's police cruiser exploded, burning the hands of one of the paramedics, who was taken to the University of Tennessee (UT) Medical Center and later released. Quick response of Officer Keith and the ambulance paramedics saved his life; and

WHEREAS, at this time, Sgt. Russell remains in critical condition at the UT Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, a fourteen-year veteran of the Tennessee Highway Patrol, Sgt. Russell was serving as the midnight supervisor at the time of his accident. He also has a brother, Cory Russell, who is a trooper in Monroe County; and

WHEREAS, it is wholly fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those law enforcement officers who have dedicated themselves to protecting and serving their fellow citizens while risking their lives; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Russell is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized for his courage and gallantry as an esteemed member of the local law enforcement; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the valiant Tennessee Highway Patrol Sergeant Lowell Russell for his meritorious service in the line of duty, thank him for his service to the good people of Tennessee, and extend to him our sincerest wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.